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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

YELLOWSTONE PARK, WYO.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Copy from FILE 143.

MONTHLY REPORT

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December, 1917.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

YELLOWSTONE PARK, WYO.

OFFICE OF SUPERVISOR

January 10th

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The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit my report of conditions in the park for the month of December, 1917.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The Yellowstone National Park was set aside by Act of Congress March 1, 1872, (Secs. 2474 and 2475, R. S., 17, Stat., 32) as a pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, and placed under the exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior, who was authorized to make such rules and regulations as he deems necessary for the care and management of the park. It is situated principally in northwestern Wyoming, but laps over a little more than two miles into Montana on the north, and almost two miles into Montana and Idaho on the west. Its dimensions are about 62 miles north and south, and about 54 miles east and west, giving an area of about 3,348 square miles, or 2,142,720 acres. Its altitude is 6,000 to 11,000 feet.

The park was governed by civilian superintendents, assisted by a few scouts, from the time it was set aside until August 10, 1886, when, under authority contained in the Sundry Civil Bill approved March 3, 1883, at the request of the Secretary of the Interior the Secretary of War detailed troops of United States Cavalry to protect the park, the commanding officer acting as park superintendent under the direct orders of the Secretary of the Interior. On October 16, 1916, by mutual agreement of the heads of the two Departments, the troops were withdrawn from the park, and a civilian supervisor, with a corps of 25 rangers for patrol and protection work, and a few civilian employees necessary for other duties, were appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to replace them. The Sundry Civil Bill, approved June 12, 1917, (Public No. 21, 65th Congress) contained a clause which made it necessary for the troops to be returned to the park for the purpose of patrolling it, and they were returned on June

26, 1917, relieving the park supervisor of so much of the duties as pertained to "protection" work.

The maintenance and construction of roads, bridges and improvements in Yellowstone Park, is carried on by special appropriation under the War Department, the work being locally in charge of an officer of the U. S. Engineer Department known as the District Engineer Officer, who reports directly to the Chief of Engineers. 278.8 miles of main road and 24.75 miles of secondary road are located in the park, and 106.5 miles of main road is maintained by the same department in the forest reserves adjoining the park on the south and east. Major George E. Verrill, Engineers, U. S. Reserves, is at the present time in charge of improvement work in the park, as District Engineer. A copy of his report for the month of December will be transmitted as soon as received.

The local office of the U. S. Weather Bureau, Department of Agriculture, is in charge of Mr. G. E. Lawton, Observer, who relieved Mr. Karl Rupert, who resigned, the latter part of October.

Park Headquarters for all departments and most of the concessioners, is located at Mammoth Hot Springs. A telephone system connects Headquarters with the sub-stations. A hydro-electric power plant furnishes the light for the buildings and grounds at Headquarters. Water, electric current, and telephone service are furnished other departments of the government in the park, by the National Park Service, without charge. The hydro-electric plant was run night and day during December.

Funds for purposes of administration of the park, and for the care and maintenance of buffalo and other animals, are obtained from special appropriations by Congress, and from revenues derived from various sources in the park.

CONDITIONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER.

The monthly mean temperature was 27.2, which was 5.6 degrees warmer than normal for the month of December. There have been but three warmer Decembers on record, namely, 1890, 1896, and 1906, when 28 was the mean temperature. A cold wave prevailed December 6 to 14, the lowest temperature recorded being -6 on the 12th. The precipitation was 2.28 inches, mostly in the form of snow which fell during the latter part of the month and melted, leaving only a trace of snow at the end of the month.

Snow closed the roads for vehicles early in the month in the Upper Park, but very little snow has stayed on the ground in the vicinity of Mammoth and along the north line of the park, and conditions for the wild animals have been of the best. Motor vehicles are still in use between Headquarters and Gardiner. Due to the fact that several days of thawing weather and some rains occurred the latter part of the month, the Gardiner Slide gave considerable trouble and several times blocked the road for a few hours at a time. The steam shovel has done excellent work on it, however, and now that it is frozen up again, it is not apt to give further trouble this winter.

EMPLOYEES.

A total of 23 permanent employees were carried on the payroll during the month of December, namely: One chief clerk (acting superintendent), two clerks, one electrician, two assistant electricians, one plumber, (from the 1st to the 25th, inclusive, when he resigned to enter the Army), two switchboard operators, one lineman at \$900, (from the 1st to the 7th, inclusive, when he resigned), one lineman at \$1200 per annum during the entire month, one laborer during the entire month, and one laborer from the 1st to the 15th, (when he was promoted to scout at \$1200 per annum), one buffalo keeper, one assistant buffalo keeper, and four scouts. Five additional scouts were employed effective the 16th and were on the payroll during the balance of the month. In addition to these a small crew was continued on work of repairing telephone lines until the 12th. Full reports on this work, and on firelane construction, have been rendered.

Distribution - regular employees: The four regular scouts were engaged so far as possible in looking after the special care of the wild animals, but this duty was more or less interfered with by the necessity for assisting in getting the details of soldiers from the 7th Cavalry in from stations. The new scouts, employed beginning December 16th, were used exclusively for this work and for garrisoning stations during the interim until the new detachment went out. The lineman was engaged in keeping the telephones and telephone lines in repair. The buffalo keeper and his assistant were engaged in caring for the tame buffalo. The other employees were on duty at Headquarters.

Leaves of absence: Employees were on regular annual leave of absence during the month of December as follows:

Clerk L. M. MacRae 3rd (noon) to 31st; 23½ days.

Buffalo Keeper Thomas G. Frazier, 24th (noon) to 31st; 5½ days.

✓ Lineman Peter L. Benito, 1st to 7th; 6 days.

Assistant Electrician Robert Oster, 22nd (noon) to 31st; 6½ days.

✓ Plumber William Wiggins, 16th to 25th; 7 days.

✓ Appointments: Roy T. Frazier was appointed assistant buffalo keeper at \$900 per annum, and entered service December 1st. Henry O. D'Ewart was appointed laborer at \$900 per annum, and entered service December 1st. Thad C. Pound, B. C. Lacombe, Court B. Dewing, Charles J. Smith, and Peter Lawson were all appointed scouts at \$1200 per annum, and entered service December 16th.

✓ Resignations: Peter L. Benito tendered his resignation as lineman at the close of December 7th. William Wiggins tendered his resignation as plumber at the close of December 25th.

✓ Vacancies: At the close of December 31st there was a vacancy in the position of lineman at \$900 per annum, on account of the resignation of Peter L. Benito.

ANIMALS - DOMESTIC.

✓ Of the driving animals, saddle and pack animals, owned by the National Park Service, such as were needed for regular work were kept up and fed, and the others were turned out on pasture at the buffalo farm on Lamar River.

FOREST FIRES.

✓ No forest fires occurred during the month.

FISHING.

✓ There was no fishing during the month except a little in the Gardiner River.

IMPROVEMENTS.

✓ The work of constructing or rebuilding telephone lines was practically discontinued at the end of November, but a small crew was retained for a few days in December to put the Tower Falls line in a serviceable condition for the winter. All work was discontinued on December 12th, and a full report of the season's work on telephone lines, showing unit cost, was forwarded on January 8, 1918. The summary of this work for the season follows:

REBUILT LINES.

LOCATION	MI.	LABOR	MATERIAL	TOOLS	SUBSISTENCE	TRANSPORTATION	TOTAL	COST PER MILE
Kammoth to	6	\$ 855.78	15.53	20.00	268.60	45.00	1195.10	199.183
Norris								
Lake Starn.	17	1854.82	61.27	35.16	553.65	40.00	2544.91	149.701
Sylvan Pass								
Thumb to								
Snake River	12	2178.41	83.13	35.00	600.00	35.00	2931.54	153.461
Kammoth to								
Soda Butte	8	1000.00	30.00	30.00	300.00	14.00	1364.00	170.50
Total	49	5839.02	189.92	110.16	1712.45	134.00	8035.55	162.33

REPAIRED LINES.

LOCATION	MI.	LABOR	MATERIAL	TOOLS	SUBSISTENCE	TRANSPORTATION	TOTAL	COST PER MILE
Headqure, Ft.	2	441.00	53.56	32.56	166.67	54.47	748.26	374.13
Yellowstone								
Kammoth to	5	99.75	5.82	32.56	22.85	54.48	215.46	43.092
Gardiner								
Kammoth to	14	1000.00	20.00	26.41	300.00	42.34	1388.75	99.196
Norris								
Swan Lake to	28	135.25	11.84	33.57	0.00	99.00	278.66	9.952
Yellowstone								
Lake Starn	12	300.00	30.00	5.00	75.00	18.46	428.46	35.705
Sylvan Pass								
Thumb to	5	500.00	20.00	11.81	250.52	19.47	801.80	165.78
Snake River								
Kammoth to	37	794.87	74.28	21.66	111.15	40.36	1042.30	28.604
Soda Butte	20	3270.87	215.50	162.57	926.17	328.58	4903.69	52.445
Total	143	9158.89	405.42	272.73	2638.62	462.58	12939.24	

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12939.24

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The Yellowstone Park Transportation Company has a few men employed at Mammoth, overhauling automobiles and making general repairs, and making some slight alterations in their buildings.

The U. S. Engineer Department continued to mine coal in the park and kept themselves and this Department supplied. The quality of the coal is improving as they go deeper into the mine.

J. E. Haynes moved the bunk house, formerly belonging to the Yellowstone-Western Stage Company at Mammoth, to the rear of his photographic buildings at Mammoth for use as a store-room, as authorized by your telegram of October 4th.

MONIES TRANSMITTED.

During December, monies were transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior as follows:

Dec. 17 - received from J. E. Haynes, on account of his photographic concession, for 1917 season,.....	\$ 557.53
" 27 - received from collections for electric current furnished to concessioners during November,.....	\$ 54.52
Total,.....	\$ 612.05

NATURAL PHENOMENA.

No changes were noted in the natural phenomena during the month.

VISITORS.

No visitors were registered at the park entrances during the month of December.

WILD ANIMALS.

The elk, deer, antelope, and mountain sheep began to come down in sight in considerable numbers, but the weather was so fine and the natural food so plentiful and easy to get at that they did not come in very close. Since January 5th a small amount of hay has been put out for them, but they did not seem to care for it until January 7th, when severe weather brought them down.

The antelope are still somewhat scattered, along the north line, and the coyotes have been chasing them more or less, but I now have

Dec.

Scout Dewing after the coyotes, and expect good results from his work in a short time.

The deer are very much scattered and comparatively few have been seen.

Scouts reported about 5,000 elk on the north side of Yellowstone River, and large numbers on Blacktail, near Tower Falls, and on Lamar River. The weather was not severe enough to drive them outside during the hunting season, which closed in Montana with December 15th. Scout Dewing, who was at Gallatin Station during the latter part of December, reports that the elk were going out slowly to their winter range down the Gallatin River, and that there were about 200 elk which remained in the vicinity of the station. He estimated that 500 went out up to the time he left the Station on January 2d. About 12,000 elk were reported in all during the month, without any special effort being made to go out to look them up. All were in excellent condition with a fair percentage of calves among them. I took pains to ascertain as nearly as possible the number of elk killed from the northern and Gallatin herds of elk during the hunting season in Montana. About 150 were killed on the Gallatin slope and 31 on the Madison River slope along the west line. About 68 were killed along the north line, of which 64 were on Boulder and Buffalo Fork, several miles outside of the park where the hunting was difficult. Total known to have been killed, 249. ✓

✓ Buffalo: No one went near the habitat of the wild herd during the month. The tame buffalo ranged during the month in the vicinity of the buffalo farm on Lamar River, and forage was so plentiful on the range that it was not necessary to feed them any hay.

✓ Coyotes: Coyotes were as numerous as usual. 36 were killed during the month.

✓ Wolves: Timber wolves were reported from several different sources during the month, and while not numerous, they are a menace to the other animals as they kill often. Two were killed during the month of December by Steve Elkins, who is working by the day with his trained dogs, hunting mountain lions.

✓ Mountain Lions: Tracks of mountain lions seem to be few. Mr. Elkins worked all during the month and succeeded in killing seven lions, - all that he got track of. He lost one of his best dogs, a valuable animal, drowned in Lamar River.

✓ Mountain Sheep: A band of fine sheep, numbering about 17, were seen frequently not far from their regular wintering ground in Gardiner Canyon. Included in this bunch are seven fine rams. As yet no sign of scab has been noted among them, but it will probably appear later, and arrangements have been made to try to capture and dip them for this disease when they are driven down by the road by cold weather. Quite a number of sheep have also been seen on Lamar River and Specimen Ridge, all in good condition.

PROTECTION AND CARE OF GAME.

✓ No cases of poaching were reported during the month of December.

During November and December, 13 snowshoe cabins were supplied and put in shape for winter use by patrols.

✓ On December 7th I was "confidentially" informed by the Commanding Officer of the troops of the 7th Cavalry stationed in the park, that his Squadron was ordered away and a squadron of the 11th Cavalry was to take its place. That on this account it would be necessary for him to withdraw all detachments at once from park stations, and he asked me to assist him in this work as much as possible. I used such scouts as I could spare, including some whom I had asked authority to hire, to stay at some of the most important stations, and used other scouts and such transportation as was available to assist in relieving the stations. A detachment of soldiers sent from Ft. Yellowstone with horses to bring out men at Lake and Snake River Stations got as far as the Thumb, and abandoned the trip on account of the deep snow. On their return to Lake Station they shot one of their horses that was exhausted by struggling through the snow, and on return to Canyon they left another horse that was exhausted, but there was sufficient forage on hand at the Canyon to keep the horses during the winter, and they finally made arrangements with the Hotel winter keeper to feed and water him until spring.

✓ A cow and calf were abandoned at Norris Station, and the Hotel winter keeper there is voluntarily looking after them to save their lives.

As soon as I heard of the proposed change, I wired you, and the order for the incoming troops was changed to one troop instead of one squadron. This has proven a wise move, as the officers and enlisted men of the incoming troop are, with scarcely an exception, totally inexperienced in any line which they need to know, and the more we have of them the worse off we are. They are agreeable, and apparently willing enough, but totally indifferent to care of property, buildings,

etc., and while much damage has been done to the buildings in the post, and much of our property lost or damaged by the squadron that just left, I look for a little ^{improvement} under the present command. I shall assist them as far as practicable, and do what I can to avoid this, but the outlook is not good.

On December 22, 1917, Troop "G", 11th Cavalry, in command of Captain Meyer H. Silven, arrived, and the squadron of the 7th left as soon as care could be procured, namely, on December 26th.

Since the arrival of the new troop, they have garrisoned the stations at Gardiner, Crevice, Soda Butte, Gallatin, Riverside, and Lake. Snake River was already garrisoned by five men of the 7th Cavalry, who claimed they could not get in to the post to go with their squadron, on account of the deep snow.

The non-commissioned officer in charge of Lake Station has had previous experience in the park, on stations, and can therefore make some patrols and do some good. Beyond this all are new men, mostly recruits, and I feel that it would be entirely unsafe for them to attempt trips of any length on skis, as they would be almost sure to get lost and perish, as the country is difficult in winter even to those who have some knowledge of it. I have, therefore, advised only care of the stations, and certain short patrols that I thought they could make safely. The other stations can get along very nicely without being garrisoned this winter, as I have ten picked scouts who will travel about among the wild animals and patrol the southern part of the park that cannot be reached from the Snake River Station.

ARRESTS AND VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW.

✓ No arrests were made during the month.

(11-17-17)
✓ On December 7, 1917, on representation of the Commanding Officer of the troops that they were assisting soldiers to get whiskey in violation of the law, I wrote letters to Otto Winkler and Max Imo, of Gardiner, Montana, debarring them from the privileges of the park. A copy of the Commanding Officer's letter to me, and of mine to these two men, all dated December 7, 1917, are inclosed for your information. I investigated the matter thoroughly, and am satisfied that these men did just what Major Glover charged them with, but the evidence was not sufficient to convict them before a court. From a few incidents that have since occurred, I am inclined to believe that these men were no more guilty of violation of the law than were many others of whom Major Glover knew, whom he made no effort to punish, and it is a question in my mind if these letters should not be withdrawn. I will not do so, however, without your authority.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

✓ The influences of the "Christmas Drive" of the American Red Cross extended to the Yellowstone Park, and during December, through the combined efforts of the representatives of the various Government Departments and concessioners in the park, authority was procured from Division Headquarters in Minneapolis, and the "Yellowstone Park Branch" of the Park County (Montana) Chapter of the American Red Cross was formed with a new membership of 110, besides five old members from other organizations. This membership consists of practically every civilian in the park, and a few from the military organization.

PROPOSED WORK.

✓ Completion of the pictorial and locational index of structures and improvements in the park, as suggested in your letter of June 15, 1917.

✓ Revision of park rules and regulations, and of the Circular of Information.

✓ Preparation of plans for gateways at the western and eastern entrances to the park by Mr. Reamer.

✓ Care and feeding of the wild animals, and destruction of carnivorous animals.

✓ Repairs and maintenance of telephone lines, water system, and hydro-electric power plant.

Very respectfully,

Acting Superintendent.

Inclosures: